

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for rapid manipulation and cutting comprising:

a housing,

a first cutting element,

a drive mechanism adapted to be mounted at least partly within the housing and operatively connected to the first cutting element for imparting relative motion to

the first cutting element as a combination of slicing and downward forces at the

portion of the first cutting element which is adapted to contact the tissue, wherein

the drive mechanism provides torque about the lateral axis of the first cutting

element to impart the slicing force, the torque causes the first cutting element to

rotate eccentrically, and the drive mechanism causes the first cutting element to

retract relative to the housing, such that the end of the housing proximal to the

first cutting element acts as a protective guard to prevent accidental contact with

the first cutting element.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is shaped substantially as a traditional scalpel.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is shaped as a handpiece.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism imparts

2 motion to the first cutting element along two of the three principal axes.

1 7. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is shaped for use as
2 a tissue manipulator for blunt force dissection.

1 8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the cutting element is adapted
2 for cutting tissue.

1 9. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the housing is adapted for use
2 as a tissue probe.

1 10. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the drive mechanism advances
2 the first cutting element relative to the housing.

1 11. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the cutting element is adapted
2 for cutting man-made materials.

1 12-13. (Canceled)

1 14. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the system includes means for
2 electrocautery.

1 15. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a
2 pinion gear assembly.

1 16. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a
2 pulley drive assembly.

1 17. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a

2 bevel gear drive assembly.

1 18. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a
2 direct motor drive assembly.

1 19. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a
2 crank arm drive assembly.

1 20. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the first cutting element
2 comprises a plurality of blades.

1 21. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes
2 hydraulic means.

1 22. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes
2 pneumatic means.

1 23. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein depth of cut is variable based on
2 the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

1 24. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein ramp angle of the incision is
2 variable based on the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

1 25. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein rate of cut is variable based on
2 the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

1 26. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein reaction load is based on the
2 design of the first cutting element.